

WHISTLER







Whistler

LITTLE ~ ~ ~
JOURNEYS
To the Homes of
EMINENT
ARTISTS

Whistler

Written by Elbert
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WHISTLER

Art happens — no hovel is safe from it, no Prince may depend upon it, the vastest intelligence cannot bring it about, and puny efforts to make it universal end in quaint comedy, and coarse farce.

THE "TEN O'CLOCK" LECTURE.



THE Eternal Paradox of Things is revealed in the fact that the men who have toiled most for peace, beauty and harmony have usually lived out their days in discord; and in several instances died a malefactor's death. Just how much discord is required in God's formula for a successful life, no one knows, but it must have a use, for it is always there ❧ ❧

Seen from a distance, out of the range of the wordy shrapnel, the literary scrimmage is amusing. "Gulliver's Travels" made many a heart ache, but it only gladdens ours. Pope's "Dunciad" sent shivers of fear down the spine of all artistic England, but we read it for the rhyme, and insomnia. Byron's "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers" gave back to the critics what they had given out—to their great surprise and indignation, and our amusement. Keats died from the stab of a pen, they say, and whether 'twas true or not we know that now a suit of Cheviot is sufficient shield. "We love him for the enemies he has made"—to have friends is a great gain, but to achieve an enemy is distinction.

Ruskin's "Modern Painters" is a reply to the contumely that sought to smother Turner under an avalanche of abuse; but since the enemy inspired it, and it made the name and fame of both Ruskin and Turner, why should they not hunt out the rogues in Elysium and purchase ambrosia?

Whistler's "The Gentle Art of Making Enemies" is a bit of sharp-shooter sniping at the man who was brave enough to come to the rescue of Turner, and who afterward proved his humanity by adopting the tactics of the enemy, working the literary stink-pot to repel impressionistic boarders.

No friend could have done for Whistler what Ruskin did. Before Ruskin threw an ink-bottle at him, as Martin Luther did at the Devil, he was one of several; after the bout he was as one set apart.

When we think of Whistler, if we listen closely, we can hear the echo of shrill calls of recrimination, muffled reveilles of alarm—pamphlet answering unto pamphlet across seas of misunderstanding—vituperations manifold and recurring themes of rabid ribaldry all forming a lurid Symphony in Red.





JOHN DAVIDSON has dedicated a book to his enemy, thus:

Unwilling Friend, let not thy spite abate,
Help me with scorn, and strengthen me with
hate.

The general tendency to berate the man of superior talent would seem to indicate, as before suggested, that disparagement has some sort of compensation in it. Possibly it is the governor that keeps things from going too fast—the opposition of forces that holds the balance true. But almost everything can be overdone; and the fact remains that without encouragement and faith from without, the stoutest heart will in time grow faint and doubt itself. It hears the yelping of the pack, and there creeps in the question, “What if they are right?” Then comes the longing and the necessity for the word of praise, the clasp of a kindly hand and the look that reassures.

Occasionally the undiscerning make remarks, slightly touched with muriatic acid, concerning the ancient and honorable cult known as the Mutual Admiration Society. My firm belief is, that no man ever did or can do a great work alone—he must be backed up by the Mutual Admiration Society. It may be a very small Society—in truth, I have known Chapters where there were only two members, but there was such trust, such faith, such a mutual uplift, that an

atmosphere was formed wherein great work was done.

¶ In Galilee even the Son of God could do no great work, on account of the unbelief of the people. "Fellowship is heaven and lack of fellowship is hell," said William Morris. And he had known both.

Some One must believe in you. And through touching finger-tips with this Some One, we may get in the circuit, and thus reach out to all. Self-Reliance is very excellent, but as for independence, there is no such thing. We are a part of the great Universal Life; and as one must win approval from himself, so he must receive corroboration from others: having this approval from the Elect Few, the opinions of the many matter little.

How little we know of the aspirations that wither unexpressed, and of the hopes that perish for the want of the right word spoken at the right time! Out in the orchard, as I write, I see thousands and thousands of beautiful blossoms that will never become fruit for lack of vitalization—they die because they are alone.

Thoughts materialize into deeds only when Some One vitalizes by approval. Every good thing is loved into life.

¶ Great men have ever come in groups, and the Mutual Admiration Society always figures largely. To enumerate instances would be to inflict good folks with triteness and truism. I do not wish to rob my reader of his rights—think it out for yourself, beginning with Concord and Cambridge, working backward a-down the centuries.



HERE are two Whistlers. One tender as a woman, sensitive as a child,—thirsting for love, friendship and appreciation—a dreamer of dreams, seeing visions and mounting to the heavens on the wings of his soaring fancy. This is the real Whistler. And there has always been a small Mutual Admiration Society that has appreciated, applauded and loved this Whistler; to them he has always been "Jimmy."

The other Whistler is the jaunty little man in the funny, straight brimmed high hat—cousin to the hat John D. Long wore for twenty years. This man in the long black coat, carrying a bamboo wand, who adjusts his monocle and throws off an epigram, who confounds the critics, befogs the lawyers, affronts millionaires from Colorado, and plays pitch and toss with words, is the Whistler known to newspaperdom. And Grub Street calls him "Jimmy," too, but the voice of Grub Street is guttural and in it is no tender cadence—it is tone that tells, not the mere word: I have been addressed by an endearing phrase when the words stabbed. Grub Street sees only the one man and goes straightway after him with a snickersnee. To use the language of Judge Gaynor, "This artistic Jacques of the second part protects the great and tender soul of the party of the first part."

¶ That is it—his name is Jacques: Whistler is a fool. The fools were the wisest men at court. Shakespeare, who dearly loved a fool, belonging to the breed himself, placed his wisest sayings into the mouths of men who wore the motley. When he adorned a man with cap and bells, it was as though he had given bonds for both that man's humanity and intelligence.

Neither Shakespeare nor any other writer of good books ever dared depart so violently from truth as to picture a fool whose heart was filled with pretense and perfidy. The fool is not malicious. Stupid people may think he is, because his language is charged with the lightning's flash; but these be the people who do not know the difference between an incubator and an egg plant.

¶ Touchstone, with unfailing loyalty, follows his master with quip and quirk into exile. When all, even his daughters, had forsaken King Lear, the fool bares himself to the storm and covers the shaking old man with his own cloak, and when in our day we meet the avatars of Trinculo, Costard, Mercutio and Jacques, we find they are men of tender susceptibilities, generous hearts and lavish soul.

Whistler shakes his cap, flourishes his bauble, tosses that fine head, and with tongue in cheek, asks questions and propounds conundrums that pedantry can never answer. Hence the ink-bottle, with its mark on the walls at Eisenach, and Coniston.



VERY man of worth is two men—sometimes many. In fact, Dr. George Vincent, the psychologist, says, "We never treat two persons in exactly the same manner." If this is so, and I suspect it is, the person we are with dictates our mental process and thus controls our manners—he calls out

the man he wishes to see. Certain sides of our nature are revealed only to certain persons. And I can understand, too, how there can be a Holy of Holies, closed and barred forever against all except the One. And in the absence of this One, I can also understand how the person can go through life, and father, mother, brothers, sisters, friends and companions never guess the latent excellence that lies concealed. We defend and protect this Holy of Holies from the vulgar gaze.

¶ There are two ways to guard and keep alive the sacred fires; one is to flee to convent, monastery or mountain and there live alone with God; the other is to mix and mingle with men and wear a coat of mail in way of manner.

Women whose hearts are well nigh bursting with grief will often be the gayest of the gay; men whose souls are corroding with care—weighted down with sorrow too great for speech—are often those who set the table in a roar.

The assumed manner, continued, evolves into a pose.

Pose means position, and the pose is usually a position of defense.

All great people are posers.

Men pose so as to keep the mob back while they can do their work. Without the pose, the garden of a poet's fancy would look like McKinley's front yard at Canton in the fall of '96. That is to say, without the pose the poet would have no garden, no fancy, no nothing—and there would be no poet. Yet I am quite willing to admit that a man might assume a pose and yet have nothing to protect; but I stoutly maintain that pose in such an one is transparent to every one as the poles that support a scare-crow, simply because the pose never becomes habitual.

With the great man pose becomes a habit—and then it is not a pose. When a man lies and admits he lies, he tells the truth.

Whistler has been called the greatest poser of his day; and yet he is the most sincere and truthful of men—the very antithesis of hypocrisy and sham. No man ever hated pretence more.

Whistler is an artist, and the soul of the man is revealed in his work—not in his hat, nor yet his bamboo cane, nor his long black coat, much less the language which he uses, Talleyrand-like, to conceal his thought. Art has been his wife, his children and his religion. Art has said to him, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," and he has obeyed the mandate.

That picture of his mother in the Luxembourg is the most serious thing in the whole collection—so gentle, so modest, so charged with tenderness. It is classed by the most competent critics of today along with the greatest works of the old masters. We find upon the official roster of the fine arts of France this tribute opposite the name of Whistler, "Portrait of the mother of the author, a masterpiece destined for the eternal admiration of future generations, combining in its tone power and magnificence, the qualities of a Rembrandt, a Titian, a Velasquez." The picture does not challenge you—you have to hunt it out, and you have to bring something to it, else 'twill not reveal itself. There is no decrepitude in the woman's face and form, but somehow you read into the picture the story of a great and tender love and a long life of useful effort. And now as the evening shadows gather, about to fade off into gloom, the old mother sits there alone, poised, serene: husband gone, children gone—her work is done. Twilight comes. She thinks of the past in gratitude, and gazes wistfully out into the future, unafraid. It is the tribute that every well-born son would like to pay to the mother who loved him into being, whose body nourished him, whose loving arms sustained him, whose unfaltering faith and appreciation encouraged him to do and to become. She was his wisest critic, his best friend—his mother!



MAJOR GEORGE WASHINGTON WHISTLER, the father of Whistler the artist, was a graduate of West Point, and a member of the United States Corps of Engineers. He was an active, practical and useful man—a skillful draughtsman, mathematician and a man of affairs who could undertake a

difficult task and carry it through to completion.

Such men are always needed, in the army and out of it. Responsibility gravitates to the man who can shoulder it. Such men as Major Whistler are not tied to a post—they go where they are needed.

When George Washington Whistler was a cadet at West Point, there came to visit the place Dr. Swift and his beautiful young daughter, Mary. She took the Military School by storm, at least, held captives the hearts of all the young men there—so they said. And in very truth the heart of one young man was prisoner, for Major Whistler married Miss Swift soon after.

¶ To them were born Deborah, the Major's only daughter, who married Dr. Seymour Hayden of London, a famous surgeon and still more famous etcher: George, who became an engineer and railway manager: and two years later, Joseph.

And when Joe was two years old, this beautiful wife, aged twenty-three, passed away, and young Major Whistler and his three babies were left alone.

At West Point Whistler had a friend named McNeill, son of Dr. C. D. McNeill, of Wilmington, N. C.—a classmate—with whom he had been closely associated since graduation. McNeill had a sister, Anna Matilda, a great soul, serious and strong. At length Whistler took his motherless brood—including himself—to her and she accepted them all. I bow my head to the step-mother who loves into manhood and womanhood children whom another has loved into life. She must have a great heart already expanded by love to do this. Naturally the mother-love grows with the child—that is what children are for, to enlarge the souls of the parents. But at the beginning of womanhood, Anna Matilda McNeill was great enough to enfold in her heart and arms the children of the man she loved and make them hers.

In the year 1834, Major Whistler and his wife were living in Lowell, Massachusetts, where the Major was superintending the construction of the first of those wonderful waterways that tirelessly turn ten thousand spindles.

And fate would have it so, that here at Lowell, in a little house on Worthing Street, was born the first of the five sons of Major Whistler and his wife, Anna Matilda. And they called the name of the child James Abbott McNeill Whistler—an awful big name for a very small baby.

About the time this peevish little pigmy was put into short dresses, his father resigned his position in the

United States Army to accept a like position with the Czar of Russia. The first railroad constructed in Russia, from Moscow to St. Petersburg, was built under the superintendence of Major Whistler, who also designed various bridges, viaducts, tunnels and other engineering feats for Adam Zad, who walks like a man, and who paid him princely sums for his services. ¶ Americans not only fill the teeth of royalty, but we furnish the Old World machinery, ideas and men. For every twenty-five thousand men they supply us, we send them back one, and the one we send them is worth more than the twenty-five thousand they send us. Schenectady is today furnishing the engines and supplying engineers to teach engineers for the trans-continental Siberian railway. When you take "The Flying Scotchman" from London to Edinburgh you ride in a Pullman car, with all the appurtenances, even to a Gould coupler, a Westinghouse air-brake, and a dusky George from North Carolina, who will hit you three times with the butt of a brush broom and expect a bob as recompense. You feel quite at home. ¶ Then when you see the Metropolitan Railway of London is managed by a man from Chicago, and that all trains of "the underground" are being equipped with the Edison incandescent light; and you note further that a New York man has morganized the trans-Atlantic steamship lines, you agree with Mr. William T. Stead that, "America may be raw and crude, but she is producing a race of men—men of

power, who can think and act." ¶ Coupled with the Englishman's remarkable book, "The Americanization of the World," there is an art criticism by Bernard Shaw, who comes from a race that will not pay rent, strangely enough living in London, content, with no political aspirations, who says, "The three greatest painters of the time are of American parentage—Abbey, Sargent and Whistler; and of these, Whistler has had greater influence on the artists of today than any man of his time."

But let us swing back and take a look at the Whistlers in Russia. Little Jimmy never had a childhood: the nearest he came to it was when his parents camped one summer with the "construction gang." That summer with the workers and toilers, among the horses, living out of doors—eating at the campfire and sleeping under the sky—was the boy's one glimpse of paradise. "My ambition then was to be the foreman of a construction gang—and it is yet," said the artist in describing that brief, happy time to a friend.

¶ The child of well-to-do parents, but homeless, living in hotels and boarding-houses, is awfully handicapped. Children are only little animals and travel is their bane and scourge. They belong on the ground, among the leaves and flowers and tall grass—in the trees or digging in sand piles. Hotel hallways, table d'hôte dinners and the clash of travel, are all terrible perversions of nature's intent.

Yet the boy survived—eager, nervous, energetic. He

acquired the Russian language, of course, and then he learned to speak French as all good Russians must. "He speaks French like a Russ," is the highest compliment a Parisian can pay you.

The boy's mother was his tutor, companion, playmate. They read together, drew pictures together and played the piano, four hands.

Honors came to the hard-working engineer—decorations, ribbons, medals, money—and more work. The poor man was worked to death. The Czar paid every honor to the living and dead that royalty can give. He ordered his private carriage to take the family to the boat as they left St. Petersburg, bringing with them the body of the loved one. And honors awaited the dead here. A monument in the cemetery at Stonington, Connecticut, erected by the Society of American Engineers marks the spot where he sleeps.

The stricken mother was back in America, and James was duly entered at West Point. The mother's ideal was her husband—in his life she had lived and moved—and that James should do what he had done, become the manly man that he had become, was her highest wish ❀ ❀

The boy was already an acceptable draughtsman, and under the tutelage of Professor Robert Weir he made progress. West Point does not teach such a soft and feminine thing as picture painting—it draws plans of redoubts and fortifications, makes maps and figures on desirability of tunnels, pontoons and hidden mines.

Robert Weir taught all these things, and on Saturdays painted pictures for his own amusement. In the rotunda of the Capitol at Washington is a taste of his quality, the large panel entitled "The Departure of the Pilgrims."

Tradition has it that young Whistler assisted his teacher on this work.

Weir succeeded in getting his pupil heartily sick of the idea of grim visaged war as a business. He hated the thought of doing things on order, especially killing men when told. "The soldier's profession is only one remove from the business of Jack Ketch who hangs men and then salves his conscience with the plea that some one told him to do it," said Whistler. If he remained at West Point he would become an army officer and Uncle Sam or the Czar would own him and order him to do things.

Weir declared he was absurd, but the Post Surgeon said he was nervous and needed a change. In truth West Point disliked Jimmy as much as he disliked West Point, and he was recommended for discharge. Mother and son sailed away for London, intending to come back in time for the next term.

The young man took one souvenir from West Point that was to stand by him. In a sham battle, during a charge, his horse went down, and the cavalcade behind went right over horse and rider. When picked up and carried out of the scrimmage, Cadet Whistler was unconscious, and the doctors said his skull was

fractured. However, his whip-cord vitality showed itself in a quick recovery; but a white lock of hair soon appeared to mark the injured spot, to be a badge of distinction and a delight to the caricaturist forever. In London the mother and son found lodgings out towards Chelsea. No doubt the literary traditions attracted them. Only a few squares away lived Rossetti, with a wonderful collection of blue china, giving lessons in painting. There were weekly receptions in his house, where came Burne-Jones, William Morris, Madox Brown and many other excellent people. Down a narrow street near by, lived a grumpy Scotchman, by the name of Carlyle, whose portrait Whistler was later to paint, and although Carlyle had no use for Rossetti, yet Mrs. Whistler and her boy liked them both. It came time to return to America if the young man was to graduate at West Point. But they decided to go over to Paris so James could study art for a few months. ¶ They never came back to America.





HISTLER, the coxcomb, had Ruskin haled before the tribunal and demanded a thousand pounds as salve for his injured feelings because the author of "Stones of Venice," was color-blind, lacking in imagination, and possessed of a small magazine wherein he briskly told of men, women and things he did not especially admire.

The case was tried, and the jury decided for Whistler, giving him one farthing damages. But this was success—it threw the costs on Ruskin, and called the attention of the world to the absurdity of condemning things that are, at the last, a mere matter of individual taste.

Whistler was once asked by a fellow artist to criticise a wondrous chromatic combination that the man had thrown off in an idle hour. Jimmy adjusted his monocle and gazed long. "And what do you think of it?" asked the painter standing by. "Oh, just a little more green, a little more green—(pause and slight cough)—but that is your affair."

Whistler painted the "Nocturne," and that was his affair. If Ruskin did not think it beautiful that was his affair; but when Ruskin went one step further and accused the painter of trying to hoodwink the world for a matter of guineas, attacking the man's motives, he exceeded the legitimate limits of criticism, and his

public rebuke was deserved. In matter of strictest justice, however, it may be as well to say that Whistler was quite as blind to the beauty of Ruskin's efforts for the betterment of humanity as Ruskin was to the excellence of Whistler's pictures. And if Ruskin had been in the humor for litigation he might have sued Whistler and got a shilling damages because Whistler once averred "The Society of St. George is a scheme for badgering the unfortunate, and should be put down by the police. God knows the poor suffer enough without being patronized!"

Mr. Whistler was once summoned as a witness in a certain suit where the purchaser of a picture had refused to pay for it. The cross-examination ran something like this:

"You are a painter of pictures?"

"Yes."

"And know the value of pictures?"

"Oh, no."

"At least you have your own ideas about values?"

"Certainly."

"And you recommended the defendant to buy this picture for two hundred pounds?"

"I did."

"Mr. Whistler, it is reported that you received a goodly sum for this recommendation—is there anything in that?"

"Oh, nothing I assure you"—(yawning) "nothing but the indelicacy of the suggestion."

The critics found much joy, several years ago, in tracing out the fact that Whistler spent a year at Madrid copying Velasquez. That he, like Sargent, has been benefited and inspired by the sublime art of the Spaniard there is no doubt, but there is nothing in the charge that he is an imitator of Velasquez, save the indelicacy of the suggestion.

It was a comparison of Velasquez and Whistler and a warm assurance that his name would live with that of the great Spaniard that led Whistler to launch that little question, now a classic, "Why drag in Velasquez?" ¶ The great lesson that Whistler has taught the world is to observe; and this he got from the Japanese. Lafcadio Hearn has said that the average citizen of Japan detects tints and shades that are absolutely unseen by western eyes. Livingston found tribes in Africa that had never seen pictures of any kind, and he had great difficulty in making them perceive that the figure of a man, drawn on a piece of paper a foot square, really was designed for a man.

"Man big—paper little—no good!" was the criticism of a chief. The chief wanted to hear the voice of the man before he would believe it was meant for a man. This savage chief was a great person, no doubt, in his own bailiwick, but he lacked imagination to bridge the gap between a real man and the repeated strokes of a pencil on a bit of paper.

The Japanese—any Japanese—would have been delighted by Whistler's "Nocturne." Ruskin was n't.

He had never seen the night, and therefore, he declared that Whistler had "flung a pot of paint in the face of the public."

That men should dogmatize concerning things where the senses alone supply the evidence, is only another proof of man's limitations. We live in a peewee world which our senses create and declare that outside of what we see, smell, taste and hear there is nothing.

¶ It is twenty-five thousand miles around the world—stellar space is uncomputable; and man can walk in a day about thirty miles. Above the ground he can jump about four feet. In a city his unaided ear can hear his friend call about two hundred feet. As for smell, he really has almost lost the sense; and taste, through the use of stimulants and condiments, has likewise nearly gone. Man can see and recognize another man a quarter of a mile away, but at the same distance is practically color-blind.

Yet we were all quite willing to set ourselves up as standards until science came with spectroscope, telephone, microscope and Roentgen ray to force upon us the fact that we are tiny, undeveloped and insignificant creatures, with sense quite unreliable and totally unfit for final decisions.

Whistler sees more than other men. He has taught us to observe, and he has taught the art world to select.

¶ Oratory does not consist in telling it all—you select the truth you wish to drive home; in literature, in order to make your point, you must leave things out;

and in painting you must omit. Selection is the vital thing **

The Japanese see one single lily stalk swaying in the breeze and the hazy, luminous gray of the atmosphere in which it is bathed—just these two things. They give us these, and we are amazed and delighted.

Whistler has given us the night—not the black, inky, meaningless void which has always stood for evil: not the darkness, the mere absence of light, the prophet had in mind when he said, “And there shall be no night there”—not that. The prophet thought the night was objectionable, but we know that the continual glare of the sun would quickly destroy all animal or vegetable life. In fact, without the night there would be no animal or vegetable life, and no prophet would have existed to suggest the abolition of night as a betterment. In the night there are flowers that shed their finest perfume, lifting up their hearts in gladness, and all nature is renewed for the work of the coming day. We need the night for rest, for dreams, for forgetfulness. Whistler saw the night, this great transparent, dark-blue fold that tucks us in for one-half our time. The jaded, the weary and the heavy-laden at last find peace—the day is done, the grateful night is here.

Turner said you could not paint a picture and leave man out. Whistler very seldom leaves man out, although I believe there is one “Nocturne” wherein only the stars and the faint rim of the silver moon

keep guard. But usually we see the dim suggestion of the bridge's arch, the ghostly steeples, lights lost in the enfolding fog, vague purple barges on the river and ships rocking solemnly in the offing—all strangely mellow with peace, and subtle thoughts of stillness, rest, dreams and sleep.



THE critics have all shied their missiles at Whistler, and he has gathered up the most curious and placed them on exhibition in a catalogue entitled "Etching and Dry Points." This document gives a list of fifty-one of his best known productions, and beneath each item is a testimonial or two from certain worthies who thought the thing rubbish and said so *ff ff*

If you want to see a copy of the catalogue you can examine it in the "treasure room" of most any of the big public libraries; or should you wish to own one, a chance collector in need of funds might be willing to disengage himself from a copy for some such trifle as twenty-five dollars or so.

Whistler's book "The Gentle Art" contains just one good thing, although the touch of genius is revealed in the title which is as follows: "The Gentle Art of Making Enemies, as pleasingly exemplified in many instances wherein the serious ones of this earth, care-

fully exasperated, have been prettily spurred on to unseemliness and indiscretion, while overcome by an undue sense of right."

The dedication runs thus: "To the rare Few who early in life have rid themselves of the Friendship of the Many, these pathetic papers are inscribed."

The one excellent thing in the book is the "Ten O'Clock" lecture. It is a classic, revealing such a distinct literary style that one is quite sure its author could have evolved symphonies in words, as well as color, had he chose. However, this lecture is a sequence, leaping hot from the heart, and would not have been written had the author not been "carefully exasperated and prettily spurred on, while overcome by an undue sense of right." Let us all give thanks to the enemy who exasperated him. There is a great temptation to produce the lecture entire, but this would be to invite a lawsuit, so we will have to be content with a few scrapings from the palette:

Listen! There never was an artistic period.

There never was an Art-loving nation.

In the beginning, men went forth each day—some to do battle, some to the chase; others, again, to dig and to delve in the field—all that they might gain and live, or lose and die. Until there was found among them one, differing from the rest, whose pursuits attracted him not, and so he stayed by the tents with the women, and traced strange devices with a burnt stick upon a gourd.

This man, who took no joy in the way of his brethren—who cared not for conquest, and fretted in the field

—this designer of quaint patterns—this deviser of the beautiful—who perceived in Nature about him curious curvings, as faces are seen in the fire—this dreamer apart was the first artist.

And when, from the field and afar, there came back the people, they took the gourd—and drank from out of it.

¶ And presently there came to this man another—and, in time, others—of like nature, chosen by the gods—and so they worked together; and soon they fashioned, from the moistened earth, forms resembling the gourd. And with the power of creation, the heirloom of the artist, presently they went beyond the slovenly suggestion of Nature, and the first vase was born, in beautiful proportion.

* * * * *

And the Amateur was unknown—and the Dilettante undreamed of.

And history wrote on, and conquest accompanied civilization, and Art spread, or rather its products were carried by the victors among the vanquished from one country to another. And the customs of cultivation covered the face of the earth, so that all peoples continued to use what the artist alone produced.

¶ And centuries passed in this using, and the world was flooded with all that was beautiful, until there arose a new class, who discovered the cheap, and foresaw a fortune in the facture of the sham.

Then sprang into existence the tawdry, the common, the gewgaw.

The taste of the tradesman supplanted the science of the artist, and what was born of the million went back to them, and charmed them, for it was after their own heart; and the great and the small, the statesman and the slave, took to themselves the abomination that was tendered, and preferred it—and

have lived with it ever since. ¶ And the artist's occupation was gone, and the manufacturer and the huckster took his place.

And now the heroes filled from the jugs and drank from the bowls—with understanding—noting the glare of their new bravery, and taking pride in its worth.

¶ And the people—this time—had much to say in the matter—and all were satisfied. And Birmingham and Manchester arose in their might, and Art was relegated to the curiosity shop.

* * * * *

Nature contains the elements, in colour and form, of all pictures, as the keyboard contains the notes of all music.

* * * * *

The artist is born to pick, and choose, and group with science these elements, that the result may be beautiful—as the musician gathers his notes, and forms his chords, until he bring forth from chaos glorious harmony.

To say to the painter, that Nature is to be taken as she is, is to say to the player, that he may sit on the piano ♪ ♪

That Nature is always right, is an assertion, artistically, as untrue, as it is one whose truth is universally taken for granted. Nature is very rarely right, to such an extent even, that it might almost be said that Nature is usually wrong: that is to say, the condition of things that shall bring about the perfection of harmony worthy a picture is rare, and not common at all.

* * * * *

The sun blares, the wind blows from the east, the sky is bereft of cloud, and without, all is of iron. The windows of the Crystal Palace are seen from all points of London. The holiday-maker rejoices in the glorious

day, and the painter turns aside to shut his eyes. ¶ How little this is understood, and how dutifully the casual in Nature is accepted as sublime, may be gathered from the unlimited admiration daily produced by a very foolish sunset.

The dignity of the snow-capped mountain is lost in distinctness, but the joy of the tourist is to recognize the traveller on the top. The desire to see, for the sake of seeing, is, with the mass alone, the one to be gratified, hence the delight in detail.

But when the evening mist clothes the riverside with poetry, as with a veil, and the poor buildings lose themselves in the dim sky, and the tall chimneys become campanili, and the warehouses are palaces in the night, and the whole city hangs in the heavens, and fairy-land is before us—then the wayfarer hastens home; the workingman and the cultured one, the wise man and the one of pleasure, cease to understand, as they have ceased to see, and Nature, who for once, has sung in tune, sings her exquisite song to the artist alone,—her son and her master—her son in that he loves her, her master in that he knows her.

¶ To him her secrets are unfolded, to him her lessons have become gradually clear. He looks at the flower, not with the enlarging lens, that he may gather facts for the botanist, but with the light of the one who sees in her choice selection of brilliant tones and delicate tints, suggestions of infinite harmonies.

He does not confine himself to purposeless copying, without thought, each blade of grass, as commended by the inconsequent, but in the long curve of the narrow leaf, corrected by the straight tall stem, he learns how grace is wedded to dignity, how strength enhances sweetness, that elegance shall be the result.

¶ In the citron wing of the pale butterfly, with its

dainty spots of orange, he sees before him the stately halls of fair gold, with their slender saffron pillars, and is taught how the delicate drawing high upon the walls shall be traced in tender tones of orpiment, and repeated by the base in notes of graver hue.

In all that is dainty and lovable he finds hints for his own combinations, and thus is Nature ever his resource and always at his service, and to him is naught refused.

Through his brain, as through the last alembic, is distilled the refined essence of that thought which began with the Gods, and which they left him to carry out.

¶ Set apart by them to complete their works, he produces that wondrous thing called the masterpiece, which surpasses in perfection all that they have contrived in what is called Nature; and the Gods stand by and marvel, and perceive how far away more beautiful is the Venus of Melos than was their own Eve.

* * * * *

And now from their midst the Dilettante stalks abroad. The Amateur is loosed. The voice of the Æsthete is heard in the land, and catastrophe is upon us.

* * * * *

Where the Artist is, there Art appears, and remains with him—loving and fruitful—turning never aside in moments of hope deferred—of insult—and of ribald misunderstanding; and when he dies she sadly takes her flight: though loitering yet in the land, from fond association, but refusing to be consoled.

With the man, then, and not with the multitude, are her intimacies; and in the book of her life the names inscribed are few—scant, indeed, the list of those who have helped to write her story of love and beauty.

¶ From the sunny morning, when, with her glorious Greek relenting, she yielded up the secret of repeated

line, as with his hand in hers, together they marked in marble, the measured rhyme of lovely limb and draperies flowing in unison, to the day when she dipped the Spaniard's brush in light and air, and made his people live within their frames, that all nobility and sweetness, and tenderness, and magnificence should be theirs by right, ages had gone by, and few had been her choice.

* * * * *

Therefore have we cause to be merry!—and to cast away all care—resolved that all is well—as it ever was—and that it is not meet that we should be cried at, and urged to take measures.

Enough have we endured of dullness! Surely are we weary of weeping, and our tears have been cozened from us falsely, for they have called us woe! when there was no grief—and where all is fair!

We have then but to wait—until, with the mark of the gods upon him—there come among us again the chosen—who shall continue what has gone before. Satisfied that, even were he never to appear, the story of the beautiful is already complete—hewn in the marbles of the Parthenon, and brodered, with the birds, upon the fan of Hokusai, at the foot of Fusi-yama.



SO HERE ENDETH THE LITTLE JOURNEY TO THE HOME
OF WHISTLER, AS WRITTEN BY ELBERT HUBBARD:
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